

Self-publishing and Social Media Guidelines: Pupils

Overview

These Guidelines are for pupils within East Lothian Council who use social media including weblogs, podcast or wikis for online communication and collaboration as part of their learning activities.

What is a blog? A weblog (or blog) is similar to a personal web page made up of frequently updated posts - rather like a 'What's new' page. You can voice your opinions, views and comments about anything - it might be your hobbies, interests or your opinion on current affairs. People who create blogs are known as 'bloggers' and the process of keeping a blog is known as 'blogging'.

What is a podcast?

The term podcasting describes audio or video that can be broadcast to an iPod, but any software and hardware application onto which you can download audio files will work just as well. Podcasting is similar to a radio broadcast but the files are available for downloading from a website. You can 'subscribe' to a podcast to have it delivered to your computer automatically.

What is a wiki?

A website or similar online resource which allows people to add and edit content collaboratively.

Publishing Guidelines

Publishing your work or ideas on the Internet is a very public activity. You should think carefully about anything you publish. Even if you delete something after you have published it, it can be found on the web for years afterwards. You shouldn't publish anything you wouldn't be comfortable with anyone viewing e.g. from parents to future employers.

Top tips for publishing

- Be safe
- Be mindful of what you say
- Be respectful to others
- Be informative
- Be interesting

Be safe

Anyone can access the Internet and view what you write on a blog or wiki. Even if your page is 'protected' there is nothing to stop your friends from copying your material and placing it elsewhere on the web. It is important to respect your privacy. Use your **first name only** and do not use pictures of yourself. If you wish to have an image associated with your blog, use a picture of something that represents you. Don't give out any personal information about yourself or anyone else.

Be mindful of what you say

You are responsible for anything that is posted in your name. Always use appropriate language and remember that how you say something is as important as what you say. Avoid exaggeration, provocation and sarcasm in the language you use.

When podcasting, consider what you are presenting and how you are presenting it. Could you be misunderstood? Be clear in the message you are trying to convey. The online environment will be considered as an extension of the classroom and all school rules still apply.

Be respectful to others

When writing on your blog or wiki or if you are commenting on others, always make sure what you write is fair and accurate.

When podcasting, do not record any person without his or her consent and awareness. You must have the consent from every individual whose voice can be heard on your podcast. Start each audio recording by identifying everyone present by their first name only.

Other bloggers and podcaster will love to hear what you think of their work. If you want to make some constructive criticism why not try giving two stars and a wish (two positive comments and one thing you think could improve).

Be informative

Write about and present what you know. Make sure you get your facts straight and ask for advice if you are not sure. Remember that your blog can be searched through Google. Make sure that you write in a way that everyone can understand e.g. limit your use of text speak.

Be interesting

There's no point in blogging or podcasting if people don't read or listen to what you say. When people leave a comment, reply to them quickly to bring them back to your site. Make sure it is interesting. Make it fun so that you will encourage your readers and listeners to come back for more. One way to do this is to expand on others ideas. You can quote other people's work, link back to it and add your own thoughts or opinions to their ideas.

These guidelines compliment the School Internet and Email policy. Any inappropriate use could lead to the loss of online privileges.

Adapted from: <http://edubuzz.pbworks.com/socialmediapupil>